

REMARKS

This application contains claims 1-34. Claims 31-34 are allowed. Claims 1, 12, 22, 27 and 30 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 2, 6, 9-11, 13, 17-21, 23 and 28 are hereby amended. No new matter has been introduced. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 9, 11, 18, 20, 28 and 29 were objected to for depending from rejected base claims, but were deemed to recite allowable subject matter. Applicant has therefore amended claims 9, 11, 18, 20 and 28 to stand as independent claims, incorporating the limitations of the base claims and (in the case of claims 11, 20 and 28) the intervening claims from which they formerly depended. Claim 29 depends from claim 28. All of these claims are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-8, 10, 12-17, 19, 21-27 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Brichta et al. (U.S. Patent 5,884,310) in view of Webber (U.S. Patent 6,418,400) and with regard to some of the claims, further in view of Britton et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0059344). While disagreeing with the grounds of rejection, Applicant has canceled independent claims 1, 12, 22 and 30 in order to expedite issuance of a patent on the subject matter that the Examiner found to be allowable. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the subject matter of these independent claims in a continuation of this application.

Dependent claims 2, 6, 10, 13, 17, 19, 21, 23 have been amended so that all of claims 2-8, 10, 13-17, 19, 21 and 23-26 now depend from newly-independent claim 9, 18 or 28. In view of the patentability of these independent claims, as explained above, all of these dependent claims are believed to be patentable, as well.

Applicant believes the amendments and remarks presented hereinabove to be fully responsive to all of the objections and grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner.

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In view of these amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims in the present application are in order for allowance. Notice to this effect is hereby requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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